65p

THE Unexplained

MYSTERIES OF MIND SPACE & TIME

Birth of the gods
The Western witch doctor
Pachita: psychic surgeon
The Campden wonder
A walk with death

154

Aus $1.85 NZ $1.80 SA R1.85 US $1.85 IR 85p

THE Unexplained
MYSTERIES OF MIND SPACE & TIME

Published weekly by Orbis Publishing Limited
Orbis House, 20/22 Bedfordbury, London WC2N 4BT

Volume 13 Issue 154

Consultants to The Unexplained
Professor A. J. Ellison
Dr J. Allen Hynek
Brian Inglis
Colin Wilson

Editorial Director
Brian Innes
Editor
Peter Brookesmith
Deputy Editor
Lynn Picknett
Executive Editor
Lesley Riley
Sub Editors
Chris Cooper
Jenny Dawson
Shona Grimbly
Hildi Hawkins

Picture Researchers
Anne Horton
Paul Snelgrove
Frances Vargo
Editorial Manager
Clare Byatt
Art Editor
Stephen Westcott
Designer
Richard Burgess
Art Buyer
Jean Hardy
Production Co-ordinator
Nicky Bowden

Circulation Director
David Breed
Marketing Director
Michael Joyce

Contents

Ancient gods
BIRTH OF THE GODS 3061
Where did the many gods of the ancient world really originate? We look at their remarkably common heritage
Peter James

Campden wonder
MURDER – WHAT MURDER? 3066
A fresh study of a 17th-century 'murder' case – in which the victim turned up alive and with a strange tale to tell
Melvin Harris

Survival of death
'COME BACK, MY CHILD . . .' 3070
A small child, Durdana Khan, 'died' for 15 minutes – and then vividly described the extraordinary world she had visited
A.G. Khan

Pachita
PACHITA: INSTANT SURGEON 3074
A well-known doctor investigates Pachita's 'instant' surgery – which included even kidney transplants
Andrija Puharich

Adrian Boshier
'FATHER OF SNAKES' 3078
We tell the curious story of white Englishman Adrian Boshier who became a fully fledged African witch doctor
Joe Friedman

Picture acknowledgements
Cover: Photri; Dr. A.G. Khan (inset); **3061:** Bridgeman Art Library; **3062:** Lauros-Giraudon; **3063:** Sonia Halliday (t); Ronald Sheridan (b); **3064:** Lauros-Giraudon (t); Ronald Sheridan (b); **3065:** Ronald Sheridan (c); **3066:** Spectrum; **3067:** Robert Estall (c); **3068:** Mary Evans Picture Library; **3068–3069:** BBC Hulton Picture Library; **3069:** Rex Features (c); Bodleian Library (b); **3070–3072:** Dr. A.G. Khan; **3072–3073:** Syndication International; **3073:** Dr. A.G. Khan; **3074–3077:** Andrija Puharich; **3078–3080:** Joan van Gogh

©1983 Orbis Publishing Limited. Typesetting by Servis Filmsetting Limited. Reproduction by La Cromolito, Milan. Printed in Great Britain by Jarrold & Sons Ltd, Norwich 15839

The Unexplained UK 65p. IR 85p. Aus. $1.85. NZ $1.80. SA R1.85. USA $1.85.
How to obtain copies of The Unexplained Copies are obtained by placing a regular order at your newsagent, or by taking out a subscription.
Subscription Rates
For six months (26 issues) £18.90, for one year (52 issues) £37.80. Send your order and remittance to The Unexplained Subscriptions, Punch Subscription Services, Watling Street, Bletchley, Milton Keynes, Bucks MK2 2BW, being sure to state the number of the first issue required.
Back numbers
U.K. & Eire: Back Nos are obtainable at cover price from your newsagent or from The Unexplained Back Nos. Orbis Publishing Ltd, 20/22 Bedfordbury, London WC2N 4BT – post free.
Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Europe & Malta: Back Nos are available at cover price from your newsagent. In case of difficulty write to the address in your country given for binders. South African readers should add sales tax.
How to obtain binders for The Unexplained
U.K. and Eire: Send a cheque/postal order for £3.25 per binder (incl. p & p) payable to Orbis Publishing Ltd to: The Unexplained Binders, Orbis House, 22 Bedfordbury, London WC2N 4BT. Please state the volume numbers required.
Australia: Binders are available through your local newsagent. In case of difficulty write to The Unexplained Binders, Gordon and Gotch (Aus) Ltd, 114 William Street, PO Box 767G, Melbourne, Vic. 3001.
New Zealand: Binders are available through your local newsagent or from The Unexplained Binders, Gordon and Gotch (NZ) Ltd, PO Box 1595, Wellington.
South Africa: Binders are available through your local newsagent or through any branch of Central News Agency. In case of difficulty write to The Unexplained Binders, Intermag, PO Box 57394, Springfield 2137.
Europe: Write with remittance of £4.00 per binder (including postage and packing) payable to Orbis Publishing Ltd, to The Unexplained Binders, Orbis Publishing Ltd, 20/22 Bedfordbury, London WC2N 4BT, England, being sure to state the volume number(s) required.
Malta: Binders are obtainable by ordering from your local newsagent price £3.25. In case of difficulty write to The Unexplained Binders, Miller (Malta) Ltd, PO Box 272, 18a Scots Street, Valletta.

NOTE: Binders and Back Numbers are obtainable subject to availability of stocks. Whilst every attempt is made to keep the price of issues and binders constant, the publishers reserve the right to increase the stated prices at any time when circumstances dictate. Binders depicted in this publication are those produced for the **U.K. market only** and may not necessarily be identical to binders produced for sale outside the U.K.
Binders and issues may be subject to import duty and/or local taxes which are not included in the above prices unless stated.

Birth of the gods

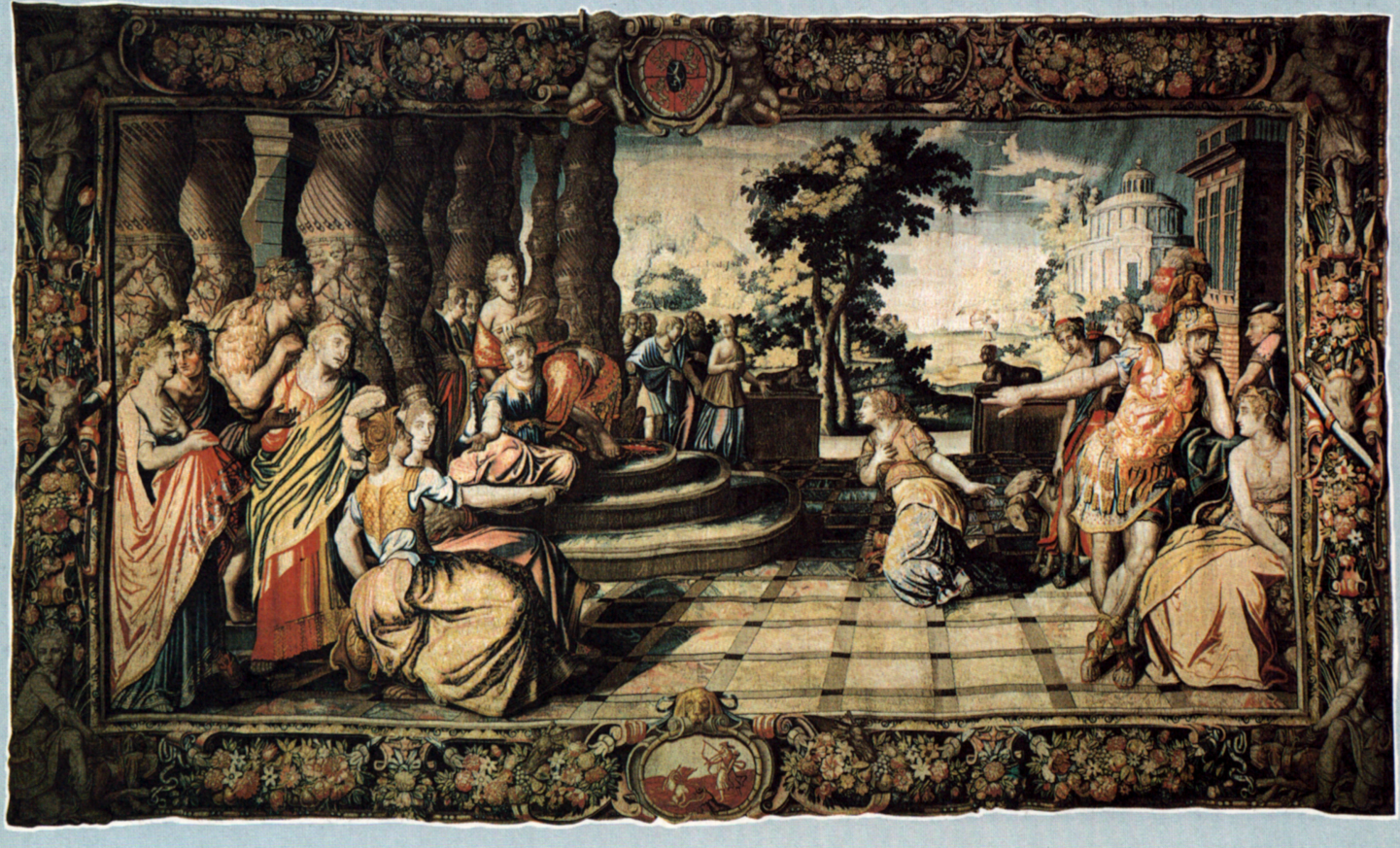
The quarrelling, licentious gods of the Greeks and Romans are regarded today as little more than entertaining myths. So why, asks PETER JAMES, were similar divinities worshipped all over the ancient world?

THE GODS OF OLYMPUS were as much of a puzzle to the ancient Greeks who worshipped them as they are to the classical scholars of today. While the Greeks dutifully offered sacrifices, prayed, and sought advice from their pantheon of colourful deities, they wondered about exactly what these beings were that they were worshipping. Were the gods the creations of human beings – personifications of natural forces and human desires? Were they actual superhuman beings in human form? Or were they perhaps historical figures whose heroic stature had been exaggerated by tradition? Different theories were proposed about where and when the gods had been born, their identities, their family relationships.

From the perspective of the modern Christian believer – or for that matter, the atheist who directs his arguments against monotheistic beliefs – the Greek fascination with a whole family of gods cannot but appear strange. The Greek gods seem strikingly ungodlike in many respects. The legends chronicle their marriages, infidelities, friendships, quarrels and even deaths in a way that is reminiscent of the modern soap opera. Unlike the wise and all-powerful God of the Bible, the Olympians were greedy, ambitious, fallible and often childishly petulant, in many ways all too human.

Yet the Greeks were fully conversant with the more refined monotheistic idea that Zeus – generally regarded as the king of the gods – was in truth the one and only god. Yet, unlike the ancient Hebrews, the Greeks never made the transition from polytheism to monotheism. All the gods maintained their vitality until the coming of Christianity. Many of the Greeks' discussions of the problem have been preserved. They clearly show that the writers felt they had good evidence of the gods' existence. They agreed that their oracles gave manifestly sound advice, and prophecies that could be checked empirically, while those who broke oaths sworn by the gods could always be seen to meet an unfortunate end. And as the Greeks expanded beyond the Aegean to meet the older cultures of the Near East, they found that numerous other races seemed to be worshipping the same gods, albeit under other names and in somewhat outlandish guises.

Although this discovery of familiar gods in other countries was reassuring in one way, it also presented the Greeks with a mass of new data that was ultimately confusing. They were acutely conscious of the youth



The assembly of the Roman gods. Like mortals, the ancient gods had vices and virtues, loves and hates, and Jupiter was from time to time required to dispense justice. On this occasion Diana, goddess of the forest, the hunt and fertility, is kneeling as a supplicant, her bow, quiver and hounds near her. Beside Jupiter sits Juno, his wife. Mars, god of war, stands at the right; Minerva, his female equivalent, is seated at the left. Near her can be seen Dionysus, with grapes twined around his head, and Ceres, with corn in her hair. To the 16th-century artist who designed this tapestry, Toussaint Dubreuil, the gods were purely fanciful. But could they have been more real than we admit?

A bacchanal – an orgy of drinking and revelry under the patronage of Dionysus (who was originally called Bacchus). The god of sensual enjoyment is portrayed in the votive figure garlanded with flowers; the revellers are human beings and satyrs. There were also more full-blooded orgies in which sexual practices and the sacrifice of wild animals were involved. A major problem for Greek thinkers was that their own myths concerning the birth of Dionysus and the spread of his cult were at variance with the fact that a very similar figure had apparently been worshipped for centuries by other civilisations

of their own culture compared to Egypt, Phoenicia, Babylonia and other civilisations. Their historians had confidently dated the births of many of their own deities, such as Dionysus, Hercules, Athena and Pan, as so many generations before their own times, amounting to some hundreds of years. What, then, did it mean when the priests of the newly discovered civilisations showed them almost unimaginably ancient temples, thousands of years older than their own – yet dedicated to gods who were to all intents and purposes identical to the Greek deities?

Particularly baffling to the Greeks were the parallels they discovered with Dionysus, god of wine and unashamed sensual enjoyment. The cult of Dionysus was shrouded in mystery in more ways than one – for the word 'mystery' first referred to the highly secret occult rites that surrounded his worship. Dionysus was worshipped publicly, in rites that involved music, drinking and dance, but there was also an esoteric form of worship, involving initiation into the mysteries. The significance of the mysteries is only hinted at by the various ancient writers who had undergone the rites and were sworn to secrecy about them, but from the clues that have been preserved we can safely infer that hallucinogenic drugs and sexual magic were used in them.

The indisputable similarities between Dionysus and the Egyptian god Osiris were disturbing to the Greeks. Both deities were associated with vegetation and were related to a nature goddess (respectively Demeter and Isis); both were gods of food and drink; both were worshipped in the form of phallic symbols; both had died and been resurrected.

Divine parallels

Both, incidentally, are conspicuously similar in the patterns of their mythological lives to another divine figure – Jesus Christ. Like Jesus, Dionysus and Osiris were betrayed by trusted companions, suffered deaths involving severe mutilation and spent some time in the Underworld before being resurrected to take an important place in the affairs of heaven. Jesus could even be regarded as sharing their association with the vine, which figures in so many New Testament stories and Jewish rituals.

The problem of the identity of Dionysus faced the Greeks much farther afield than Egypt. When Greek soldiers under Alexander the Great arrived in the foothills of

northern India they were obliged to accept the local deity Shiva as yet another version of Dionysus. Why was a Greek god supposedly born in Thebes worshipped in such a remote part of the world?

By way of explanation a legend was concocted: Dionysus had left Greece to conquer the world with an army of drunken satyrs and nymphs, spreading the cultivation of the vine far to the east. But the logistics of such a campaign baffled some Greeks: Arrian, a military writer of the second century AD, wrote:

> Nobody knows who this Dionysus was, nor the date of his invasion of India, nor where he started from, and I myself should hardly care to say if this Theban deity marched with his army against the Indians from Thebes . . . or how it was that after passing through the territories of so many warlike peoples unknown to the Greeks of that date, he fought and conquered only the Indians.

Exasperated by the task of deriving a realistic account of Dionysus's campaigns from the legends, Arrian concluded:

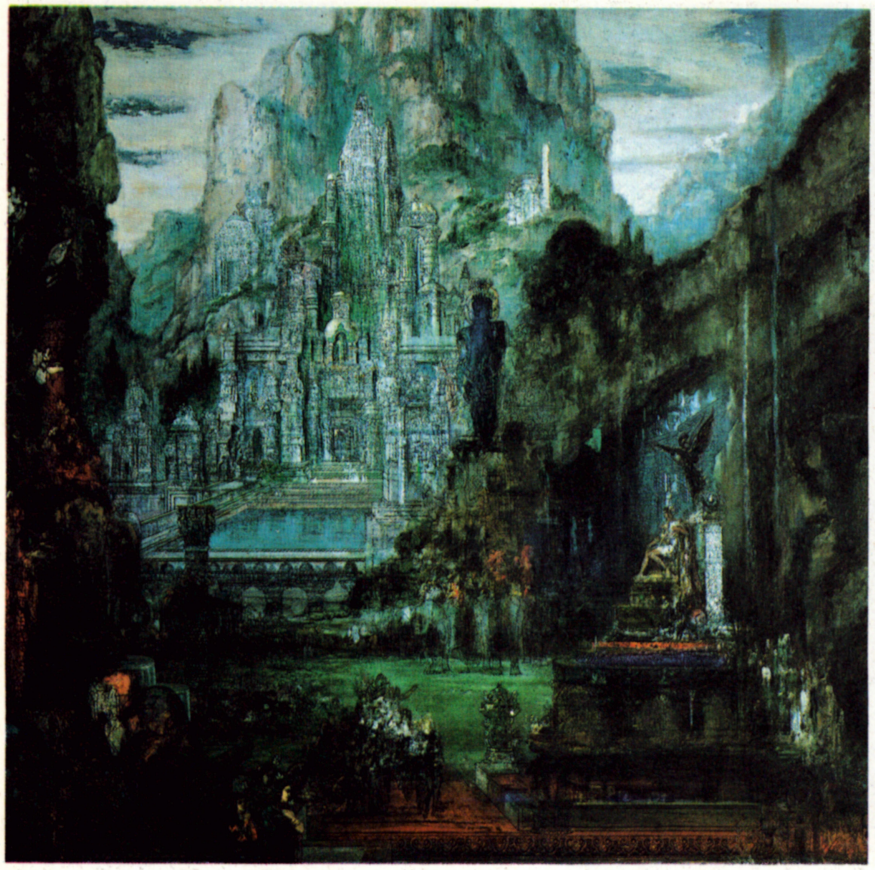
> However, one should not inquire too closely where ancient legends about the gods are concerned; many things which reason rejects acquire some colour of probability once you bring a god into the story.

Other Greeks, however, were determined to discover the real origins of their gods and to explain their similarities with the gods of other religions. A new theory was sparked off by the career of Alexander the Great. By the time of his death in 323 BC at the age of 32, Alexander had imposed a single government on the world from Greece to India, in a spectacular series of campaigns. Towards the end of his brief life Alexander was flirting with the idea that he himself was divine – a form of megalomania that later afflicted several of the Roman emperors, including Caligula and Nero. A regular topic of heated discussions at Alexander's drunken courts was the definition of a deity. Alexander, to many of his contemporaries, was on the borderline between god and mortal.

According to the Greek philosopher Euhemerus, who wrote shortly after Alexander's death, there was evidence that the ancient gods were simply based on inflated memories of great historical figures. Euhemerus claimed that he had found a column inscribed with a register of all the births and deaths of most of the important Greek deities in, of all places, a remote island in the Arabian Gulf. This story is undoubtedly fraudulent, but his theory had a wide appeal among the public of his day, who were searching for a rational explanation of the ancient religion they had inherited. They had witnessed Alexander's meteoric rise to power and his assumption of divine status, so

Above: the god Osiris – an Egyptian equivalent of Dionysus. He is seen here in the burial wrappings in which he is usually portrayed. Like Dionysus, he was a god of food and drink, associated with vegetation, who according to myth had died and had been resurrected

Right: Shiva, the Indian version of Dionysus – like his Greek and Egyptian counterparts, a god of wine and revelry. This figure shows him dancing with a wine cup in his hand



Above: the triumph of Alexander. The youthful conqueror, who had established an empire embracing the whole civilised world from Greece to India, began to think of himself as a god – and many of his subjects were ready to believe he was. The example of Alexander inspired the Greek thinker Euhemerus to suggest that the myths of the gods were distorted recollections of the lives of historical personages

the idea that the ancient gods were exaggerated versions of previous world conquerors or great inventors seemed quite plausible. Thus in the Euhemerist account Zeus had once been a king of Crete who through his military might and the help of his admiral Poseidon had dominated the Mediterranean world. Poseidon was later remembered as the god of the seas (his Roman equivalent was Neptune), while Zeus was elevated to the role of king of the gods, and called Amun in Egypt, Belus in Babylonia, and Jupiter in Rome.

Euhemerus's theory falls into the category of 'reductionist' historical theories, which attempt to explain a complex problem with one very simple idea. It can be compared with the 'ancient astronaut' theories of Erich von Däniken (see page 1270). According to him, all we need to do is to suppose that there was one major visitation by extra-terrestrials in the past and we can explain the very concept of gods, as well as many of the technological wonders of the ancient world, in one fell swoop. The mortal prodigies of Euhemerus, who gave rise to the myths of the gods, are replaced by von Däniken with extra-terrestrial prodigies who nonetheless perform the same function.

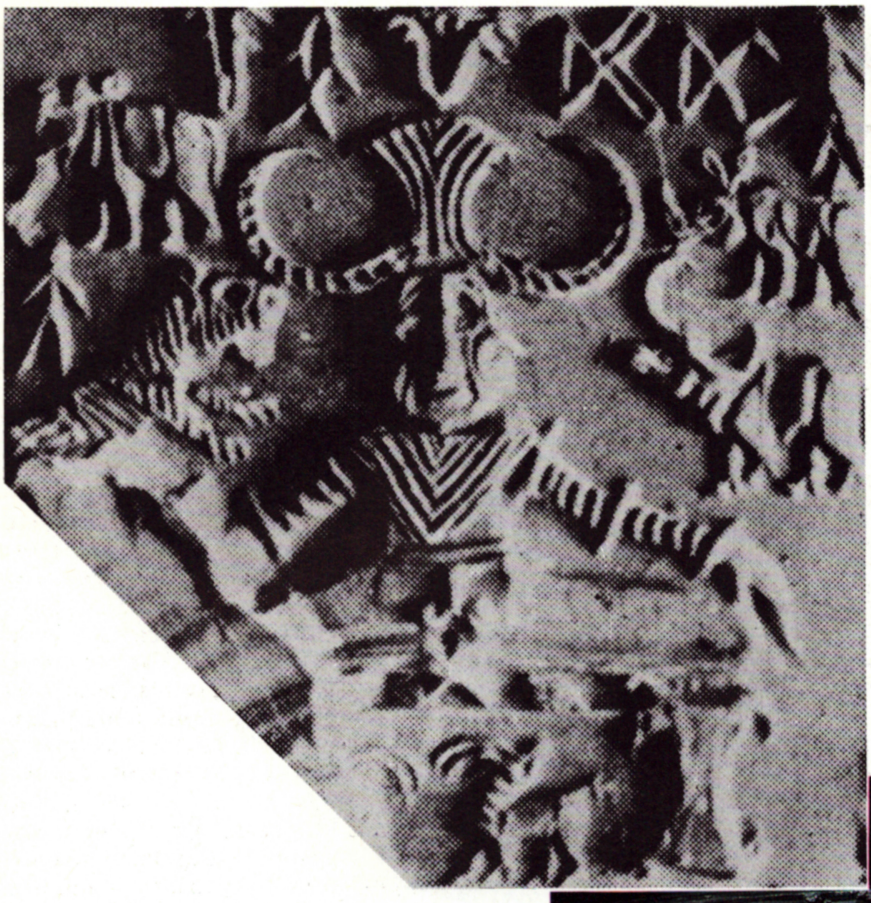
Now the basic idea that some extra-terrestrial encounters may lie behind the worldwide stories of 'sky people' is certainly worth investigating. Probably the only serious study of the idea is Robert Temple's *The Sirius mystery* (1976), in which he argues that much of the Greek mysteries involved a highly detailed knowledge of the invisible companion of the star Sirius. However, the evidence he brings to bear is open to more than one interpretation. But the appeal of von Däniken is that of Euhemerus: just as the Euhemerists, living in the shadow of Alexander and his successors, attempted to explain mythology in terms of world conquerors, von Däniken took features of contemporary life, UFOs and space travel, and used them to explain prehistory in terms of 'spacemen'.

An excess of heroes

Although the theory of Euhemerus could account, with some stretching of the imagination, for the geographical spread of the Dionysiac religion, it could never cope with the disparity in the ages of the Greek, Indian, Egyptian and other versions. It necessitated convoluted suppositions of more than one 'Dionysus' and conquests of different parts of the world by several different armies of drunks. The Roman thinker Varro counted as many as 300 supposedly historical personages living at different times and places who had been put forward as prototypes of the god Jupiter, as well as several Apollos, Demeters, Aphrodites, Dionysuses, and so on. Euhemerist theorising obviously reaches a dead end if it attempts to explain the origins of closely similar cults by means of a multiplicity of historical prototypes.

But the evidence of parallels among widely separated cults is even more extensive today than it was in classical times. Modern archaeological research has provided concrete evidence of the spread of Dionysiac cults. Alain Daniélou, a specialist in Hindu religion, proves beyond a shadow of doubt the complete identity of Shiva and Dionysus. To mention only a few of the characteristics shared by the two gods: both were closely associated with vegetation and fertility, and were also the protectors and charmers of animals; both were represented as youths, sometimes effeminate or hermaphroditic; both were symbolised by the bull and the snake and were shown represented with

Right: Alexander is admitted to the company of the gods: Amun-Re, the Sun god, presents him with the symbol of life, in a wall carving from a temple in the Egyptian city of Luxor. Euhemerus believed that works such as this, intended to magnify the greatness of rulers, could deceive later generations into thinking those rulers were genuinely divine



bull's horns on their heads; both were often depicted naked, as phallic deities; both were said to have roamed the countryside with an orgiastic band of ecstatic revellers, spreading the use of alcohol; and so on.

The parallels, even down to the various titles accorded to the two gods, are so close that there seems little chance that they developed independently as 'fertility cults', of the kind that anthropologists and classicists early in this century habitually postulated. The similarities extend to Osiris, the Egyptian equivalent of Shiva and Dionysus.

Daniélou argues that the cult of Dionysus arrived in Greece from India – a movement opposite in direction to that suggested by the Greek myths. This movement brought Shivaism not only to the Near East but even to Western Europe. The Celtic god Cernunnos shows striking similarities to Shiva. On a silver cauldron from Jutland he is shown, like the Indian god, as 'Lord of the Animals', surrounded by wild beasts with horns on his head and a serpent grasped in his hand. Most interesting of all is the posture adopted by the god. He is seated with his feet drawn in towards his crotch and his knees touching the ground, almost in the yogic half-lotus position. Bizarre though it seems, the Germanic tribes of Julius Caesar's day may have worshipped a deity from an Indian yogic religion.

The present Western interest in oriental religions and yoga is usually thought of as a new fad that developed only in this century.

Top: Shiva, from a seal of the Mohenjo-Daro culture of India, about 2000 BC. The god, wearing a mask and large bull's horns, phallus erect, is squatting in a yogic meditational posture, surrounded by animals. There are parallels with the orgiastic cult of Dionysus – but the resemblance to the figure of Cernunnos (above) is equally obvious. Cernunnos is a Celtic deity, portrayed here on a silver cauldron from Jutland, in Denmark, from about 100 BC. Were the Danes practising yoga at this time?

Yet a picture of Cernunnos from Meigle in Tayside, Scotland, dating from the 8th century AD, shows the familiar horned god, flanked by animals, with his legs knotted together in what appears to be a caricature of the lotus posture.

But even if there were a yogic cult in ancient Europe, it is another question as to whether it spread westward from India. The Shiva cult is undoubtedly of great antiquity in India. Evidence for it is found as far back as 6000 BC, in India's neolithic period. Yet the archaeological evidence from Europe includes one staggeringly early find. In the 1970s an extremely well-preserved grave from pre-neolithic times was unearthed at Lepenski Vir in Yugoslavia. Dating from around 6000 BC, it revealed a skeleton buried in the same lotus-like posture found in the Shiva images of some 4000 years later.

Clearly there are chapters in the history of human religion that remain to be written. The mystery cults of Dionysus and Shiva may be late survivals of a mystical religion that spread throughout the Old World in prehistoric times. The Greeks were certainly wrong when they put the birth of Dionysus no earlier than 1500 BC. The evidence would suggest the spread of a mystical movement that most would regard as astonishingly complex for Stone Age times. But this is surprising only if we are under the same delusion that afflicts the work of Erich von Däniken: the tacit assumption that our prehistoric ancestors were somehow less bright, perceptive and complex than ourselves. In reality archaeologists are merely beginning to scratch the surface of an ancient world where philosophy, religion and science were far more developed than we presently think, and the contacts between different cultures around the world were far more extensive than we have so far imagined.

On page 3086: parallels between the gods of the Old World and the New

Murder-what murder?

When William Harrison disappeared, his 'murderers' confessed – and it seemed an open and shut case. Yet Harrison was alive, and had a bizarre story to tell. MELVIN HARRIS recounts this 17th-century mystery

ONE OF THE MOST PERPLEXING documents in the British Museum is a 23-page pamphlet dealing with 'one of the most remarkable Occurrences which hath happened in the Memory of Man'. It was written in 1676 by Sir Thomas Overbury and tells of a unique and macabre mystery that was so strange that a number of historians have come to the conclusion that the story was fiction.

Overbury's story begins in 1660, the year that saw the ending of the English Commonwealth and the restoration of the monarchy. On Thursday 16 August one William Harrison set out to walk over 3 miles (5 kilometres) from Chipping Campden to Charringworth in the Cotswold hills. Though he was a frail man, about 70 years old, he thought nothing of walking considerable distances every day. And on this fateful day he was off to collect rents due to Lady Campden, for William Harrison was her faithful and reliable steward.

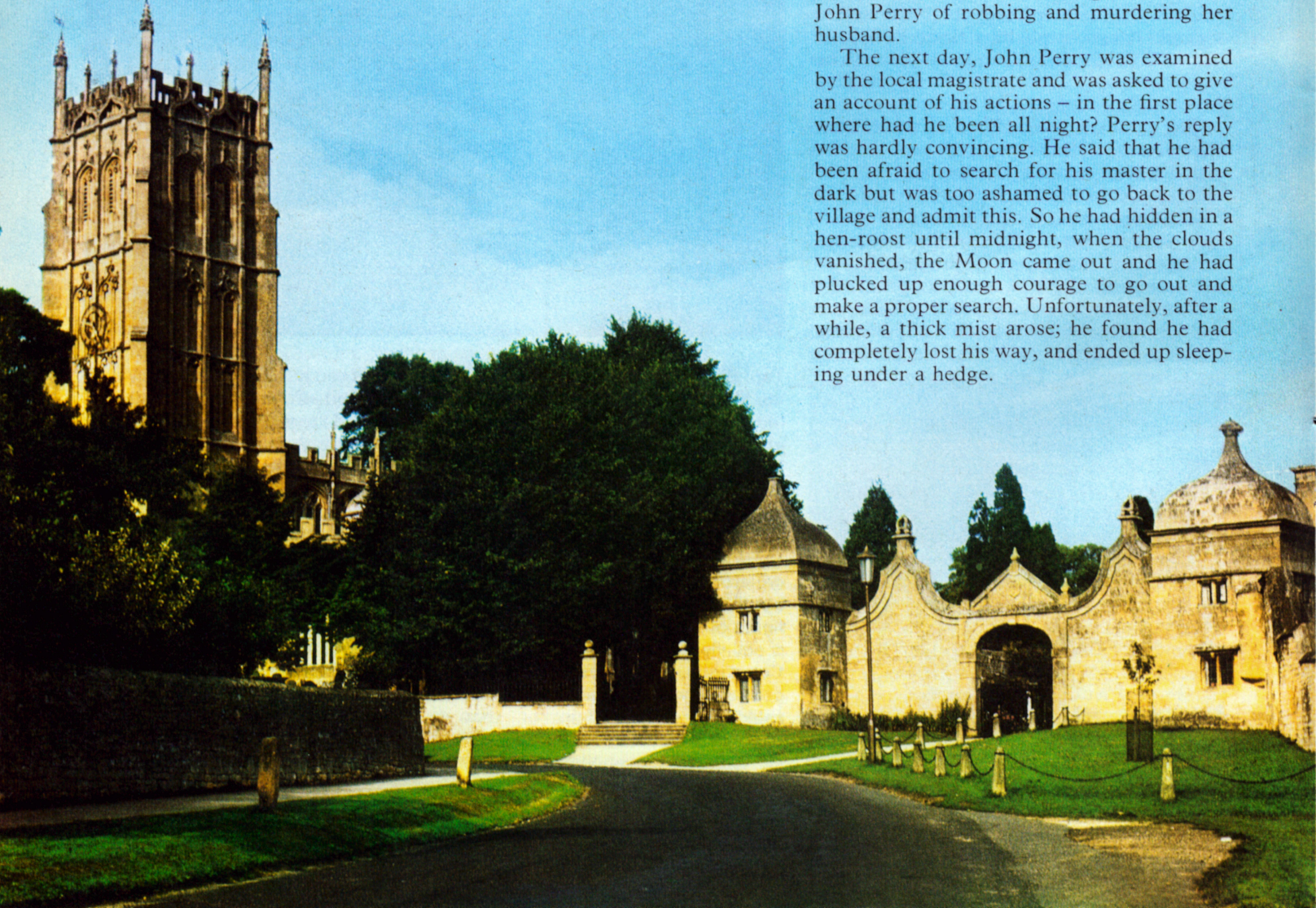
Chipping Campden, Gloucestershire, as it is today. On 16 August 1660 William Harrison, rent collector for Lady Campden, set out from here to nearby Charringworth – and disappeared. Then a local family, the Perrys, confessed to his murder – but where was the body?

He was expected to return home by early evening at the latest, but time went by without any sign of him. So at 8 p.m., his wife sent a servant out to look for him. The servant was a man called John Perry.

As the hours went by William Harrison still failed to return – and what is more, there was no sign of John Perry. By the early morning the Harrison family were at their 'wits' end, and William's son Edward went out to hunt for both men. On the road leading to Charringworth he met John Perry who insisted that he had looked everywhere for the old man without finding the slightest trace of him. He then offered to make a further search with Edward, but even this hunt proved futile, and they turned back.

On their journey home they were given some alarming news: someone had found William Harrison's hat and collar by the roadside, and both articles were covered with blood and cut about with a knife. The men feared the worst and rushed back to Chipping Campden to rouse the town. Soon everyone who was able was out searching. Every ditch and wood was scoured, but nothing more was found. It was then that Mrs Harrison, in a fit of anguish, accused John Perry of robbing and murdering her husband.

The next day, John Perry was examined by the local magistrate and was asked to give an account of his actions – in the first place where had he been all night? Perry's reply was hardly convincing. He said that he had been afraid to search for his master in the dark but was too ashamed to go back to the village and admit this. So he had hidden in a hen-roost until midnight, when the clouds vanished, the Moon came out and he had plucked up enough courage to go out and make a proper search. Unfortunately, after a while, a thick mist arose; he found he had completely lost his way, and ended up sleeping under a hedge.



The magistrate felt that this story was incredible, and as a result Perry was kept in custody for a week while a new search was made for Harrison's body. Once again, the searchers had no luck. They failed to uncover even a single fresh clue. And then the case took a completely new turn, for Perry said he had secret information that he was prepared to reveal only to the magistrate. His wish was granted, and he was asked to explain himself.

At first, Perry simply said that he knew for certain that his master had been murdered, but he refused to name the murderer, and remained stubborn about this for some time. Then he had a change of mind – and confessed that the murder had been carried out by his own mother and his brother!

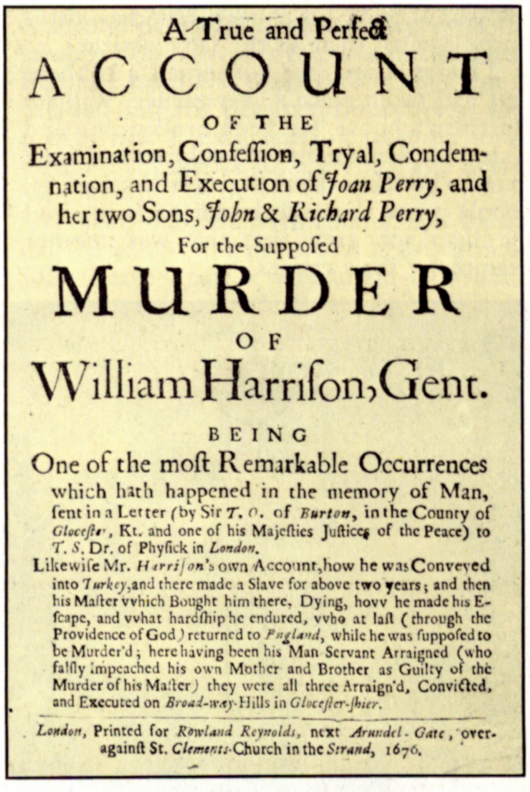
Now the magistrate knew the whole family and he refused to believe this charge. He warned John Perry that his testimony might cost his mother and brother their lives. He also warned him not to drag innocent people down with him – for by now the magistrate was convinced that John Perry himself was the murderer. And he was equally convinced that Perry had acted on his own.

Yet, despite all pleas from the magistrate,

John Perry would not alter his story – in fact, he went on to tell it in even greater detail. According to him, his family had been urging him to commit crimes for years – ever since he had taken up his post as Harrison's servant. At first, they had asked him only to steal things, but then they had demanded to know when the rents were collected so that they could waylay the steward. All the time they kept reminding him of their poverty.

They had pressed him so hard, said Perry, that in the end he agreed to help. And on 16 August he told his brother that Harrison was due to collect the rents that day. They selected a place along the steward's route and hid themselves, ready for ambush and robbery. Their original plan had been merely to knock Harrison unconscious and relieve him of the rent money he had collected. But the plan misfired. The old man had tried to shout for help, and John's brother had promptly strangled him. Afterwards they had carried the body away and dumped it in a field while their mother made off with the money.

Below: Broadway Hill, close to Chipping Campden, where the Perrys – two brothers and their mother – were hanged in the spring of 1661 for the murder of William Harrison. They had retracted their confession and went to the gallows protesting their innocence. Few would have believed them had the 'murdered' man not turned up two years later, alive and well. He explained his absence by claiming to have been abducted and sold into slavery in Turkey, whence he escaped and returned to England. This somewhat far-fetched story was seized upon by the pamphleteers of the day (right), who called it 'one of the most remarkable occurrences . . . in the memory of Man'



A True and Perfect
ACCOUNT
OF THE
Examination, Confeſſion, Tryal, Condemnation, and Execution of *Joan Perry*, and her two Sons, *John* & *Richard Perry*,
For the Suppoſed
MURDER
OF
William Harriſon, Gent.
BEING
One of the moſt Remarkable Occurrences which hath happened in the memory of Man, ſent in a Letter (by Sir *T. O.* of *Burton*, in the County of *Glocester*, Kt. and one of his Majeſties Juſtices of the Peace) to *T. S.* Dr. of Phyſick in *London*.
Likewiſe Mr. *Harriſon*'s own Account, how he was Conveyed into *Turkey*, and there made a Slave for above two years; and then his Maſter vvhich Bought him there, Dying, hovv he made his Eſcape, and vvhat hardſhip he endured, vvho at laſt (through the Providence of God) returned to *England*, while he was ſuppoſed to be Murder'd; here having been his Man-Servant Arraigned (who falſly impeached his own Mother and Brother as Guilty of the Murder of his Maſter) they were all three Arraign'd, Convicted, and Executed on *Broad-way*-Hills in *Glocester-ſhier*.
London, Printed for *Rowland Reynolds*, next *Arundel-Gate*, over-againſt St. *Clements*-Church in the *Strand*, 1676.

Truth or consequences

Later that night, the Perrys had returned to leave the steward's hat and collar by the roadside to provide a false trail. John's mother and brother had shifted the body to a new place where it would not easily be found. After John's confession Joan and Richard Perry were arrested, and an intensive search was made for the body. All the possible hiding places suggested by John Perry were checked and rechecked, but the search proved fruitless. Joan and Richard Perry refused to help in any way; in fact, they denied any knowledge of the murder and robbery and maintained that John was lying. But even when they were brought face-to-face with John, he still stuck to his story. He swore on his life that he was telling the complete truth. He even identified a string noose found on his brother as the very noose that had been used to strangle the steward.

Unfortunately for them, the mother and brother had no alibi for the time of the murder, so John Perry's account was finally accepted as valid. As a result, in September 1660, the three Perrys were brought before Sir Christopher Turnor at Gloucester Assizes. In his wisdom the judge set the case to one side, arguing that since there was no body, there was no real evidence of murder. Despite this ruling, the Perrys were not

released at once, for another case was introduced against them at the same assizes.

This separate case concerned a robbery that had taken place a year earlier: William Harrison's house had been broken into and £140 had been stolen. No culprits had been found – but once the Perrys were in custody, people began to recall the earlier event, and the suspicion grew that this was another example of their crimes.

People who felt sorry for the Perrys urged them to confess. For even if they had organised the robbery, they would not have had to go to prison. This strange state of affairs was the outcome of the Act of Pardon and Oblivion issued by Charles II. This act was intended to heal the wounds left by the Civil Wars, and it covered crimes committed before May 1660. Because of this, the Perrys would gain an immediate pardon for the earlier crime once they had admitted guilt. Faced with this offer, the Perrys confessed and were pardoned. But it was decided that the murder case would be placed before a different judge.

In the spring of 1661, the case was reopened before Sir Robert Hyde, a sterner judge than Sir Christopher Turnor. He took careful note of the robbery the Perrys had confessed to. And when they publicly withdrew this confession, he made it obvious that he had little time for them.

The first day of the new trial was dramatic – for John Perry now swore that all his statements about the murder were untrue. He said that when he had made them he had been quite mad and had not understood the meaning of anything he had said. But the court simply took this as a last desperate attempt to escape hanging. John Perry, his mother and brother were convicted and sentenced to death.

Above: Charles II is welcomed back to Britain as monarch in 1660. The Perrys escaped punishment for one crime through the Act of Pardon and Oblivion, which effectively pardoned all offenders of crimes committed before the Restoration. However, they were unlucky enough to be brought to trial again, this time facing a sterner judge, who had them hanged

The Perrys were taken to Broadway Hill, just within sight of the place where the murder had been committed. There, one after the other, they were hanged. To the last second, they claimed they were innocent, and the terrible truth is – they were! For Harrison was still alive. And two years after his supposed death he was back in Chipping Campden and carrying out his old duties.

William Harrison's story was perhaps even more fantastic than John Perry's confession. For the old man alleged that he had been working as a slave in Turkey. He claimed that on the day of his disappearance he had been waylaid by three strangers who had made him a prisoner and taken him on horseback across country to Deal in Kent. There they had put him on board a ship that, once at sea, was chased and captured by Turkish pirates. All the passengers were taken to a slave market and sold. Harrison himself had been bought by a Turkish doctor and employed as a servant in this rich man's house.

Fortunately for Harrison, the doctor was 80 years old and in bad health and he died after a year or so. Harrison was then able to sell a silver bowl belonging to the doctor, and with the money he paid for a passage home. That, incredible as it sounds, was Harrison's account, and for the rest of his life he was to insist that every detail was accurate.

For some 250 years this astonishing tale was regarded as doubtful – there seemed to be no contemporary records to back it up.

Right: *Piracy* by Peter Monamy (1689–1749). Harrison alleged he had been captured by Turkish pirates and sold as a slave to a Turkish doctor

Then, in 1926, Lord Justice Atkin discovered the book of the Clerk of Assize of the Oxford Circuit for the period in question. And there was an entry proving that the three Perrys were indicted for the murder of Harrison, pleaded not guilty and were convicted. Then an interesting document was discovered at Belvoir Castle. This showed that John, Richard and Joan Perry were taken in on Wednesday 3 March, guilty of the murder of William Harrison, gentleman, and were sentenced to be hanged.

Witches all?

There have been many attempts to fathom the mysteries behind the extraordinary behaviour of John Perry and his master. The most lurid theories have it that all the main characters were involved in a witchcraft cult, and that the secret workings of their group involved a vital expedition by the old man and an enormous deed of self-sacrifice by the young one. Nothing in these explanations, however, explains why Richard and Joan Perry had to be dragged into the case.

Oddly enough, an explanation involving witchcraft was, in fact, the first one ever to be accepted by the 17th-century public. In 1945 one E. O. Winstedt of the Bodleian Library in Oxford discovered the two earliest accounts of the tragedy on the Bodleian shelves. A pamphlet dated 1662 claims that 'the Widow Pery was a witch, and after her Sons had robd him [Harrison], and cast him into a Stone Pit, she by her witch-craft conveyed him upon a Rock in the Sea near Turkey . . .'. Then the whole tale is told in verse.

John Stonehouse MP, who faked his death in 1974 in order to start a new life. Perhaps a similar urge overtook William Harrison in his old age

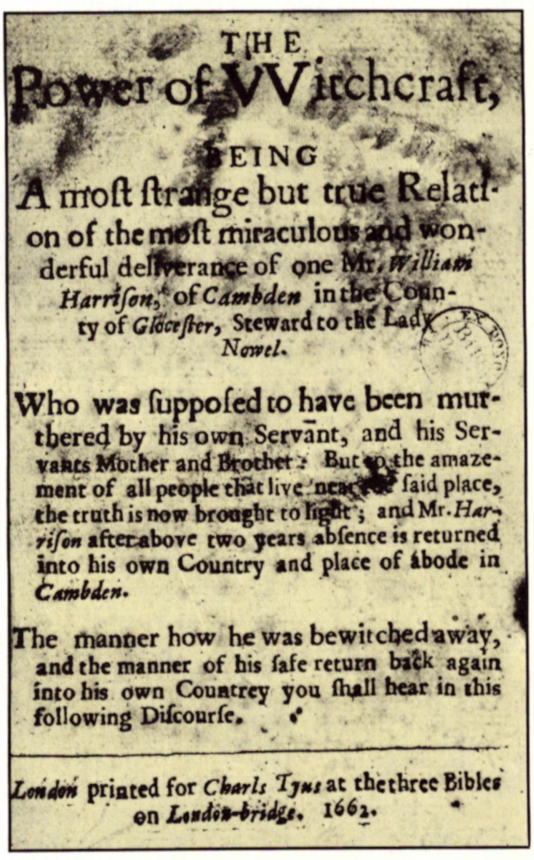
A second pamphlet, in prose, expresses the same sentiments and the writer concludes that 'the Lord was pleased to bring them to this sad end and deserved punishment, and I wish that it may prove a warning to all others that practice such devilish and horrid Witchcrafts.'

For all that, the elements of this drama may be much more prosaic. A brainstorm on John Perry's part – a paranoid delusion – would be enough to lead him to incriminate himself and his family. And there is evidence that, earlier in the year, he had acted most oddly; while, in jail, he was constantly accusing Joan and Richard of poisoning his food.

As for Harrison, it may well be that his vanishing act had a very much simpler cause. Like many men before him and many since, he may have tried to start a new life. Perhaps he yielded to the temptation to end his days in a blissful union; perhaps he took up with an old flame from his past – or even a new fancy. One thing is certain: Harrison must have moved well away, out of reach of news from the Cotswolds, for he would hardly have been left in peace to enjoy his new life had it been known that there were three innocent lives at stake.

This alternative explanation is perhaps less exciting, but by no means far-fetched. In 1974 a famous British MP, John Stonehouse, faked his own death and assumed a new identity in order to make a fresh start. The parallel with Harrison's behaviour is obvious; in neither case is there any need to look for time-warps or feats of magical transportation.

Right: a pamphlet dated 1662 accusing Joan Perry of having bewitched Harrison and conveying him by means of witchcraft to the Turkish coast – after her sons had robbed him. This particularly lurid theory was one of the first, and most popular, explanations of Harrison's disappearance



THE
Power of Witchcraft,
BEING
A moſt ſtrange but true Relation of the moſt miraculous and wonderful deliverance of one Mr. *William Harriſon*, of *Cambden* in the County of *Glocester*, Steward to the Lady *Nowel*.

Who was ſuppoſed to have been murthered by his own Servant, and his Servants Mother and Brother: But to the amazement of all people that live near the ſaid place, the truth is now brought to light; and Mr. *Harriſon* after above two years abſence is returned into his own Country and place of abode in *Cambden*.

The manner how he was bewitched away, and the manner of his ſafe return back again into his own Countrey you ſhall hear in this following Diſcourſe.

London printed for *Charls Tyus* at the three Bibles on *London-bridge*. 1662.

'Come back, my child...'

A small girl, dangerously ill, 'died' for a quarter of an hour – and, according to her own account, went to a new world in the stars, met long-dead relatives and had an interview with God. Her father, A.G. KHAN, tells her astonishing story

LATE IN THE AUTUMN of 1968 Durdana, the younger of my two daughters, then about two and a half years old, 'died' for around a quarter of an hour. She had been ill for some months, getting progressively worse. She began to become paralysed, and later developed episodes of vomiting and blindness. I was an army doctor in those days, posted to a small unit high in the foothills of the Himalayas; we took Durdana to the military hospital, some miles away, for examination, but investigations proved inconclusive. A suggestion was made that the symptoms might be the after effects of a viral encephalitis that had claimed the lives of some dozen children in the area some time before.

I was busy in the medical inspection room one morning when my orderly came running to tell me that my wife was calling me – something had happened to baby Durdana.

My living quarters were a large hut in the station compound, adjacent to the inspection room. Durdana had been very bad the night before and, fearing the worst, I hurried home. My wife was in the garden, standing beside the child's cot. A hurried examination revealed no sign of life in the little girl. 'She's gone,' I said. With a look almost of relief, for the child had been in extreme pain, my wife gently lifted the limp little form from the cot and carried her inside. I followed. Certain emergency measures are mandatory under army regulations, and one of my staff, who had followed me from the inspection room, hurried off to get the requisite equipment.

My wife carried the child to our bedroom and laid her down on my bed. After another examination I began to carry out the prescribed emergency procedures, rather half-heartedly, knowing that they were unlikely to have any effect. While doing so, I found myself repeating, half unconsciously, under my breath, 'Come back my child, come back.'

As a last resort, my wife poured a few drops of the nikethamide – a respiratory stimulant – we had given Durdana the night before into the child's mouth. They trickled out of her lifeless mouth and down her cheek. We looked sadly on – and then, to our amazement, the child opened her eyes and, making a wry face, gravely informed us that the medicine was bitter. Then she closed her eyes again. Quickly I examined her – and, as I watched, signs of life began to reappear, albeit very faintly. Gradually they grew stronger. It is difficult to say, but I think she had been 'dead' for around a quarter of an hour.

One day soon afterwards – when Durdana had somewhat recovered from her 'death' and my wife from her shock – mother and daughter were in the garden. 'Where did my little daughter go the other day?' asked my wife. 'Far, far away, to the stars,' came the surprising reply. Now Durdana was an intelligent and articulate child – and whatever she said had to be taken seriously, or she would become annoyed. 'Indeed,' exclaimed my wife, 'and what did my darling see there?'

'Gardens,' said Durdana.

'And what did she see in these gardens?'

'Apples and grapes and pomegranates.'

'And what else?'

'There were streams, a white stream, a brown stream, a blue stream, and a green stream.'

'And was anyone there?'

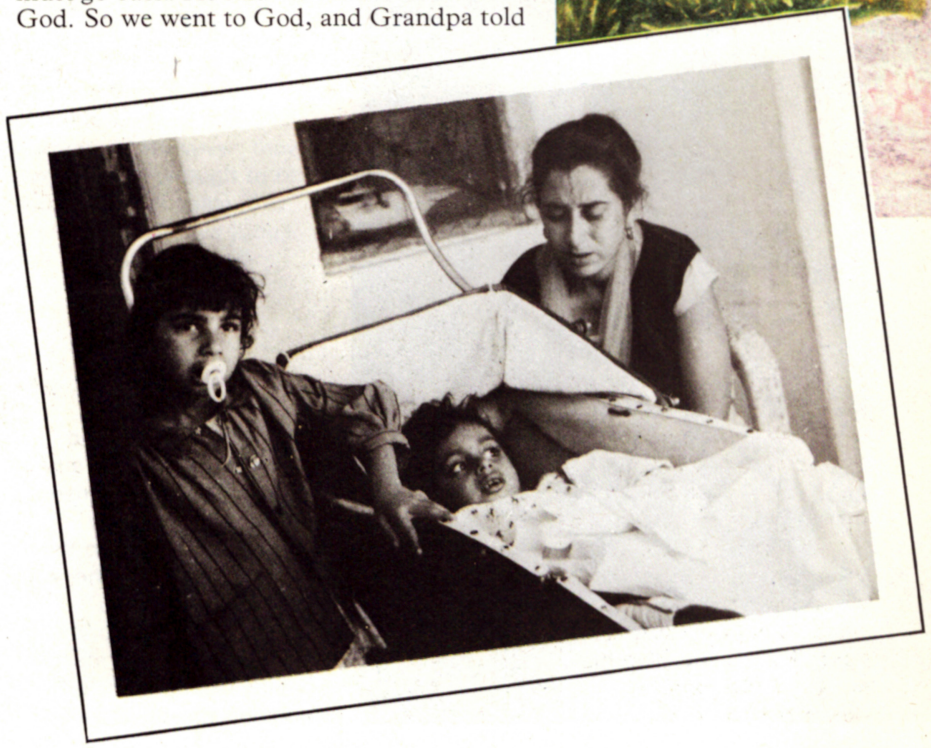
'Yes, my grandfather was there, and his mother, and another lady who looked like you.'

My wife was greatly intrigued. 'And what did they say?'

'Grandpa said he was glad to see me, and his mother took me in her lap and kissed me.'

'Then?'

'Then I heard my daddy calling me, "Come back my child, come back." I told Grandpa that Daddy was calling me and I must go back. He said we should have to ask God. So we went to God, and Grandpa told



Left: Durdana's impression – painted in 1980 – of what she saw on her visit to the 'stars'. She found herself in a garden with four streams – white, brown, blue and green. The white stream is shown in this painting. Subtle differences showed Durdana that she could not be on Earth: there appeared to be no Sun – everything shone with its own faint luminescence – and physical objects seemed to have no substance. Durdana has painted this picture (below) to show what the scene would look like on Earth

him that I wanted to go back. "Do you want to go back?" God asked me. "Yes," I said, "I must go back. My Daddy is calling me." "All right," said God, "Go." And down, down, down I came from the stars, onto Daddy's bed.' This was more than interesting. Durdana had indeed 'come to' on my bed – an unusual place for her to find herself, for the children slept or played in their own beds or their mother's, never in mine. And when Durdana regained consciousness she was in no state to know where she was. But my wife was more interested in Durdana's interview with the Almighty.

'What was God like?' she asked.

'Blue,' came the startling reply.

'But what did he look like?'

'Blue.'

Try as we might, then and later, to get the

Left: Durdana, aged two and a half years, with her mother and older sister, on her way to recovery after having 'died' for a quarter of an hour as the result of a neural illness. Once she was well enough to speak, her parents asked her where she had gone during that quarter hour. 'Far, far away, to the stars,' was Durdana's disconcerting reply

Left: Durdana's impression of God. Questioned soon after her experience, she said that she had heard her father's voice calling her home – and had gone to ask God's permission to return to Earth. When asked to describe what God looked like, she could only say 'blue'

child to describe God in more detail, she could only repeat that he was 'blue'.

Soon afterwards, we took Durdana to Karachi for treatment at the neuro-surgical department of the Jinnah Post-Graduate Medical Centre. After a complex operation on her skull, Durdana gradually began to recover. I returned to duty, while my wife stayed in Karachi with the convalescent Durdana. Before they left to rejoin me, they visited several of our relatives and friends in Karachi. While visiting the house of one of my uncles, as they sat chatting over a cup of tea, Durdana wandered about the room, holding onto pieces of furniture for support – for she was still unable to stand unaided. Suddenly she called out 'Mummy, Mummy!' My wife ran to her. 'Mummy,' said Durdana excitedly, pointing to an old photograph on a side table, 'this is my grandpa's mother. I met her in the stars. She took me in her lap and kissed me.'

Durdana was quite right. But my grandmother died long before Durdana was born; only two photographs of her exist, and both are in the possession of this uncle of mine. Durdana was visiting his house for the first time in her life, and in no way could she have seen this photograph before.

We later moved to London, and Durdana's story began to attract interest from the media. The BBC featured Durdana in a 1980 *Everyman* programme on survival of death and, before the filming began, the producer,

Angela Tilby, came to visit us. She admired a number of paintings by Durdana that were hanging on the walls. Durdana had become a gifted landscape painter, and had received many awards and prizes for her paintings. Mrs Tilby made the interesting suggestion that Durdana should try to paint what she saw when she was in the stars.

'I've been to this place . . .'

Durdana was later featured on the BBC programme *Pebble Mill at one* – and her paintings of the stars were shown and discussed at some length. The day after the programme had been broadcast, I received a telephone call from a Mrs Goldsmith, one of my patients – a very intelligent, well-read German-Jewish woman. She said she had seen Durdana on the television the day before, and expressed the wish to meet my daughter personally and to see her paintings again. It turned out that Mrs Goldsmith had had an experience of near death similar to Durdana's. 'I nearly jumped out of my chair when I saw this picture on the television,' she said about one of the paintings. '"My God," I said, "I've been to this place. . . ."'

Listening to her speak, I felt that she seemed a little over-excited – until I realised that what she was trying to tell us was not

Below: Durdana and her father with one of Durdana's paintings of the scenes she saw during the time she was apparently dead. One of Durdana's father's patients, a Mrs Goldsmith (right), saw the paintings when they were featured on the BBC television programme *Pebble Mill at one* – and immediately recognised the landscapes as those she had seen during a near-death experience. Mrs Goldsmith, however, had seen more than Durdana had

that she had been to similar gardens, but that she had visited the actual spot that Durdana had painted. It appeared that she had seen more of the place than Durdana had – I had called Durdana away too soon! Mrs Goldsmith recognised everything that was in Durdana's picture, and described things that were not in the picture. They sat and talked about what was round the bend in the stream that Durdana had painted, and about the location of the other streams that Durdana had described to her mother.

What of Durdana's feelings during her experience? They are strikingly similar to those reported by Mrs Goldsmith – and by many other people who have gone through near-death experiences. She was very happy in the stars, and returned only out of a sense of duty, because her daddy was calling her. She had a feeling of freedom: she felt she was everywhere at once, and could reach wherever she wanted to. There was no source of light, and hence no shadows. Everything was visible through its own luminescence. There was no sound, and no animals – at least, she saw none. Physical objects were ethereal images: they seemed to have no substance, no weight. She felt she knew everything and everybody.

I have presented Durdana's story as simply as possible, as it happened. But what does it imply? Where was it that Durdana spent her quarter hour of 'death'? Durdana herself believes that her experience somehow reflects her own expectations: 'If I had been a Martian, perhaps I would have been sent to a replica of Mars. There perhaps, God would have appeared red.' And yet Durdana's experience must be more than a dramatisation of her own imagination – for Mrs Goldsmith recognised the very same place.

Such questions must be left for experts to decide. This is merely an account of the experience of one little girl – an experience that is strange, thought-provoking and not a little awe-inspiring.

The Mexican healer Pachita was able to perform amazing feats of psychic surgery, including delicate eye operations and transplanting vital organs, apparently with complete success. ANDRIJA PUHARICH reports on these extraordinary talents

Pachita: instant surgeon

SINCE THE REMARKABLE CAREER of Brazilian psychic surgeon José Arigo (see page 378) was reported in the 1950s and 1960s, it seems that a certain type of healer may exist who can perform major surgery successfully on people while violating every rule of modern surgery.

The practitioner of psychic or instant surgery uses an ordinary knife or pair of scissors to cut the living tissues; he can operate on any part of the body without using any anaesthetic, yet apparently has complete control over the amount of pain felt by the patient. No antiseptic precautions are taken, yet there is no sign of post-operative infection. Most astounding of all is the apparent ability of the psychic or instant surgeon to cut tissue without causing severe haemorrhage. After the operation the patient rests for a few hours and is then able to stand and walk about.

The Mexican healer Pachita, who died in 1979, had been practising instant surgery since 1930, and treated about 200 new patients each week. For the greater part of her career she steadfastly insisted on secrecy and anonymity, and refused every offer of publicity. Then in 1977 she announced that she would like her methods to be studied scientifically because, as she said,

> I believe that the earth is to undergo a catastrophic metamorphosis within the next 21 years. People will be able to get healed only by the kind of practice that I use. Therefore I want to pass on my knowledge to others and teach them how to heal as I do.

As a result of this decision I was given permission by Pachita to set up a study group to observe and document her instant surgery.

Pachita's early life was an unsettled one. She was born on 3 December 1899 in Hidalgo del Parral, Mexico; her adopted father, a former slave, drifted across the United States from New York to Los Angeles living off a succession of odd jobs, until he finally got work as a tent-hand with a travelling circus in Mexico. Pachita, then aged eight, settled down happily with the circus. According to her own account, she related more easily to animals than to people, and she first exercised her healing powers on animals.

Far left: Pachita conferring with the author in 1978, a year before her death. She was anxious that her method of psychic surgery should be 'studied scientifically' so that others might be able to operate as she did – without anaesthetics or antiseptic precautions

Above and left: Pachita making an incision in the neck of a patient suffering from cancer of the larynx; the beads of coagulated blood (strangely enough blue, rather than red) were a typical feature of her surgery. One week after the operation the scar was almost impossible to detect (right)

After performing as a high-wire acrobat for several years she left the circus and, at the age of 18, joined the revolutionary general Pancho Villa, serving in the Mexican revolution as a soldier and a nurse. It seems that she did not use any special healing powers at this time; she extracted bullets with a hunting knife and cauterised bleeding or infected wounds with a red hot poker.

After her spell as a revolutionary Pachita entered a convent, but left after a year. She married, had children, and lived as a housewife. Then, when she was 30 years old, she suddenly recovered her childhood ability to heal and began to practise instant surgery.

In January 1978 a team of nine people, including myself, went to Mexico to study Pachita's methods.

I decided to undergo instant surgery myself before allowing any of my own patients to be operated on by Pachita. For two years I had been suffering the gradual onset of otosclerosis (spongy bone growth) in both ears, causing progressive loss of hearing. The operation was to correct this.

I was not hypnotised before the operation, nor was any medication given. I lay down on the table, and some cotton pads were placed around the ear to absorb any bleeding. Three witnesses were present, one of whom took photographs. Holding the knife in her right hand, Pachita quickly inserted 3 inches (7.5 centimetres) of the knife blade into the right ear canal; the forefinger of her left hand guided the blade in. The pain was acute; yet I did not scream, or try to avoid the knife, even though it felt as if the tip of the blade had penetrated the eardrum. After holding the knife in the ear canal for about 40 seconds, Pachita withdrew it, and the pain ceased immediately. The left ear was operated on in a similar way; this time the pain was even greater – close to my breaking point. As soon as the knife was withdrawn however the pain stopped.

The surgery had taken three minutes; no sterile procedure was used, and Pachita's bare hands were covered with blood from previous operations.

Ringing noises

After the operation there was only minimal bleeding. But a new complication appeared. My head was ringing with loud noises – so loud that I could not hear what people were saying to me. I was given a tincture (contents unknown) and told to put one drop in each ear daily; the noises decreased gradually, and by the eighth day after the operation had ceased altogether. In fact my hearing was now so acute that I suffered painfully from hyperacusis (abnormally increased power of hearing); this condition lasted for about two weeks. One month after the operation my hearing was completely back to normal.

After this experience I felt completely confident in Pachita's treatment, and able to

Far left: Andrija Puharich undergoing ear surgery by Pachita. It seemed to him that the knife was plunged 3 inches (7.5 centimetres) into the ear canal and probably penetrated the eardrum; the pain was intense, yet he was able to tolerate it without anaesthetic or other medication

Top: Pachita holding a human kidney – cut in half lengthways – before implanting it in her patient; she made a deep incision on one side of the lower back (above) and dropped one half of the kidney into the hole. After making a second incision on the other side, Pachita invited Dr Puharich to withdraw the knife (right), which he did only with some difficulty. The entire operation lasted 92 seconds

recommend her instant surgery to patients.

One case the team studied concerned a 46-year-old man who had suffered from loss of speech for over a year due to cancer of the larynx. Pachita first made a semicircular incision on the patient's lower neck, from his left side towards the right. She then inserted the knife about 3 inches (7.5 centimetres) into the throat (the tip of the knife probably penetrated the larynx). The patient felt pain, but was able to tolerate it. After about 12 seconds Pachita withdrew the knife and continued the throat incision up to the right ear. I was then allowed to insert my finger in the incision and palpate the exposed windpipe, as well as the lobes of the thyroid.

Knife swallower

Pachita then withdrew the knife from the incision and (without cleaning it) inserted it into the mouth of the patient until it reached the level of the vocal chords; the patient tolerated this procedure without gagging. After the operation, which lasted four minutes, the patient lay on the floor for an hour and then drove himself home in his car.

When I interviewed the patient a week later, I could see only a very faint scar where the knife had cut open his neck. He said he had had no discomfort after the operation, and had been able to eat and drink normally within 24 hours. At the time I saw him he could speak again, although his voice was hoarse; a month after the operation his speech was normal, and there was no trace of cancer.

Probably the most extraordinary aspect of Pachita's work was her ability to transplant human organs with complete success. I witnessed her carry out a number of transplant operations. One of these was a kidney transplant performed on a 34-year-old woman who had come from the United States to be treated by Pachita.

The patient had a history of repeated kidney infections since the age of 13, and this had resulted in very severe damage to both her kidneys. Pachita diagnosed the condition correctly, and expressed the opinion that the patient needed new kidneys. She suggested that she should transplant at least one kidney, and possibly two, depending on what she found when she opened up the patient. The patient consented to undergo surgery, and Pachita decided on a two-stage operation.

In the first operation she inserted the knife in the lumbar region and made a transverse incision 4 inches (10 centimetres) deep across both lumbar muscles and the spine. The

The steel hunting knife used by Pachita for all her operations, which included eye surgery, brain surgery and tissue transplants. The blade was about 7 inches (17.5 centimetres) long; it was not usually cleaned between one operation and the next

preserving jar was brought to Pachita at the operating table and she lifted the kidney out with her blood-covered hands. Holding it in her hands she sliced it in two lengthways, saying that she was going to implant the two halves separately on the two sides of the patient. She then handed me the kidney to touch, so that I could be sure it was real.

Pachita then plunged the knife deep into the right side of the patient's back, twisted it around, and asked me (acting as her assistant) to drop one half-kidney into the hole. I did so, and was surprised to feel the kidney being 'sucked into' the body of the patient. When I palpated the hole immediately afterwards, I found that the tissue had closed up and the hole was gone! Pachita then plunged the knife some 5 inches (12.5 centimetres) into the patient's other side. She asked me to withdraw it, and I found it took about 20 pounds (9 kilograms) of pulling force to extract the blade.

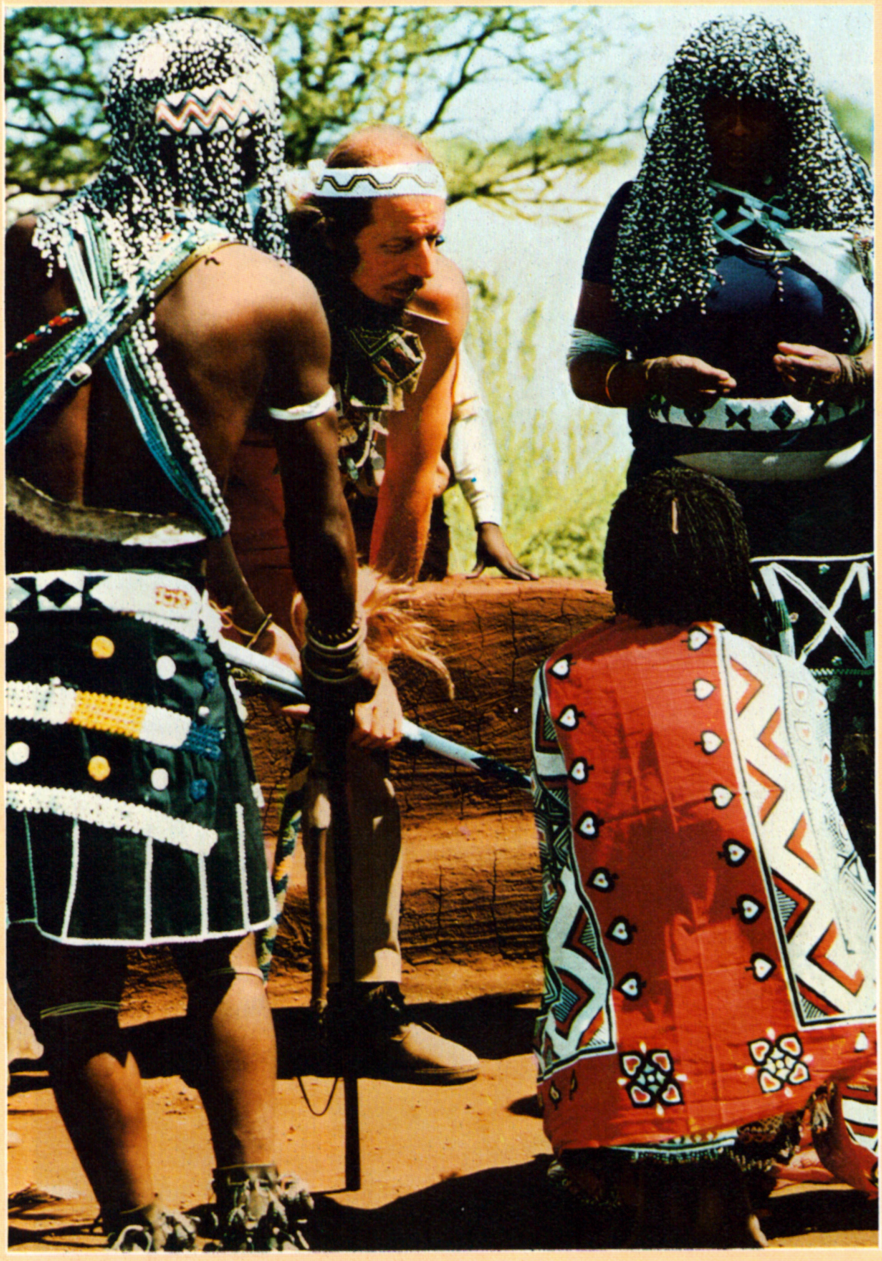
The other half of the kidney was implanted in a similar manner; during the operation the patient experienced only a moderate level of pain. One hour afterwards she was able to stand, unsteadily, and three days after the operation she boarded a commercial airliner and flew back to the United States. She reported, by telephone, a complete and uneventful recovery.

Instant clotting

Following my own observation of Pachita's methods, I believe that she was able to dispense with orthodox surgical practices such as clamping cut blood vessels because in her operations the blood clotted immediately on escape from the blood vessels. I saw tissues excised and organs transplanted without any haemorrhage, and without tissue rejection. After an operation, the patient usually rested for a few hours on the floor, and was then able to stand and walk. No post-operative medication was given, and there appeared to be no post-operative shock. Seven days after an operation scar tissue at the point of incision was negligible.

Pachita used one knife for all her operations, and wielded it with her right hand; her left hand was also closely involved, and was often held over the tip of the knife blade. Pachita said this was because the power to control bleeding resided in her left hand.

Whether Pachita's methods of psychic surgery could be taught to others, as she herself wished, is open to doubt; but having both witnessed Pachita's surgery and experienced it myself, I am convinced it was genuine, effective and produced therapeutic results with the minimum of pain and shock.



'Father of snakes'

Wandering at will in the African bush Adrian Boshier learned many secrets of African culture and history – including the esoteric lore of the witch doctors. JOE FRIEDMAN reports on the life of an extraordinary explorer

ONLY A VERY FEW WHITE MEN have ever been initiated into the fraternity of African witch doctors; Adrian Boshier was one of them. Born in England in 1939, he was almost immediately evacuated to the United States at the outbreak of the Second World War. After his return to England in 1946 he was sent to one of the first specialised schools that concentrated on teaching survival skills in an outdoor environment. This rugged regime provided the young Boshier with a training in self-sufficiency that was to prove invaluable to him in later life.

Adrian Boshier (centre), flanked by two *sangomas* (witch doctors), undergoing an initiation ceremony. His witch doctor training was rigorous and covered prophecy, herbalism, healing and divination

As a young boy Boshier was fascinated by the stories of the early African explorers – Stanley, Livingstone, Burton and Selous. He read everything he could find that was written by them; and he longed to go to Africa and follow in their footsteps. The possibility that he would ever do so seemed extremely remote; until one day his mother told him she was going to marry a man who was about to take up a teaching post in South Africa. Boshier was 16 when his family emigrated.

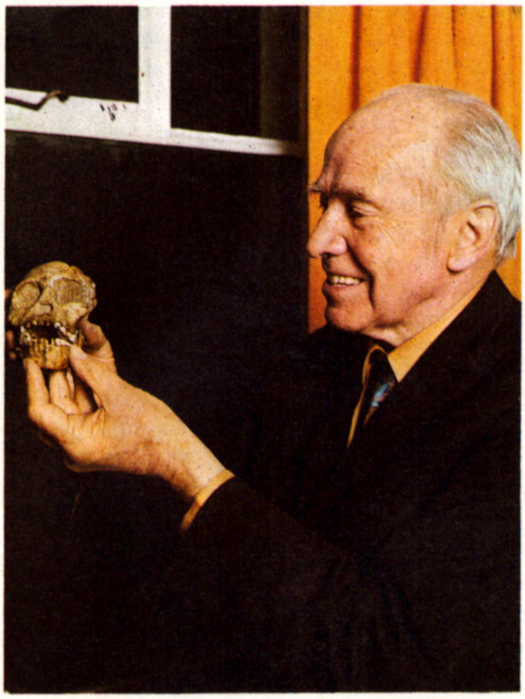
A few days after arriving at his new home, Boshier set out into the African bush armed only with a pocket knife and a bag of salt (for trading with the Africans). Hitch-hiking out into the countryside, he asked each successive driver, 'Are we in the bush yet?' When one answered in the affirmative, he left the car and walked straight out into the wilderness; within a few hours he was far from civilisation.

This was the first of many trips spent wandering through the bush, learning where to sleep and where to hunt, where to find water and shelter from the Sun, and how to avoid the wild animals. Eventually he gained the respect and help of the people who shared the African countryside with him.

His obsession with snakes probably contributed to this. Boshier was extraordinarily fond of hunting and capturing snakes – often poisonous ones; he seemed unable to pass a snake by without demonstrating that he could master it. Eventually he discovered that he could make a living by selling the snakes' venom. In this way his 'hobby' provided the means to sustain ever longer trips into the wild. The African tribesmen called him Rradinoga (father of snakes), and this name, together with his reputation as a white man who lived in the bush, preceded him on his wanderings.

In 1962 Boshier met Raymond Dart, who was a world-famous archaeologist and curator of the Museum of Man and Science in Johannesburg. Dart had found many fragments of stone and bone implements, which he believed to be primitive tools thousands of years old. At their first meeting, Boshier told him that he had come across such implements still in use in remote areas of the bush – information that confirmed Dart's earlier hunches that the fragments were indeed tools. Dart enthusiastically enlisted Boshier to return to the bush, in the hope that he would come across similar finds.

Boshier's ability to live off the land and survive the many hazards, such as the wild animals, bad weather and lack of food, was attributed by the tribesmen to the help of his



Archaeologist Raymond Dart (left) found that many of Boshier's discoveries confirmed his own theories, and he enlisted Boshier to carry out practical archaeological research in northern Transvaal

spirit guides. Boshier himself felt his success was due to luck and hard work, and this attitude was regarded by the tribesmen as a kind of blindness to the real situation. This fundamental disagreement became a problem for Boshier, because during his wanderings he increasingly found that the people who had the information he wanted were the tribal witch doctors, or *sangomas*. These *sangomas* were not only the priests and physicians of the African tribes, but also their herbalists, psychiatrists and historians. They alone knew the origin and meaning of the ancient and modern cave paintings that Boshier had discovered; and though he was eager to learn their secrets, he found his questions always led to a dead end.

This at least was the state of affairs until Boshier began to suffer from the '*sangoma*'s illness' – epilepsy. The first attacks were mild and brief, but he soon began to suffer more prolonged and severe bouts of the disease. Western medicine regards epilepsy as an illness brought on by head injury, electric shock, or the effect of drugs causing periods of disorganised activity in the brain. However the African witch doctors, and indeed the ancient Greeks, took a very different view. The Greeks regarded epilepsy as a sacred disease, which possessed those who were favoured by the gods and endowed them with the gift of prophecy. The tribesmen also regarded epilepsy as a form of possession – in this case by spirits who wanted the patient to undergo training and initiation into the rites of the *sangomas*; the spirits would act as guides and sources of information. Because the disease is seen as being caused by *Moya* (which means spirit or power) tribesmen cherish anyone who manifests the symptoms of this divine illness.

In Boshier's case, his epilepsy proved to be the passport to the knowledge he wanted. He was accepted as a candidate for initiation as a junior *sangoma* in the Makgabeng tribe, and began to learn the secrets of the cave paintings, of herbalism and prophecy. The training was rigorous.

To take one example, he could at any time be called on to find objects that his teacher had hidden around the village. At first he would be told what the hidden object was; but in the later stages of the training he was told neither what he was looking for nor when he should look for it. He was expected to receive both these pieces of information (together with the location of the object) from the spirits. Only when the apprentice had shown himself to be repeatedly successful in locating hidden objects was he considered to be near the completion of his training.

Boshier himself, for example, tested a *sangoma* by hiding the skin of a gemsbok (a South African antelope) in the boot of his Land Rover under a canvas sail. When he asked the *sangoma* to tell him about the

Above and right: rock paintings discovered by Boshier in a cave in the Makgabeng mountains in northern Transvaal. Boshier was unable to learn the meanings of the cave paintings – until he was initiated into the fraternity of witch doctors of the Makgabeng tribe

hidden object, she went into a trance and, after singing and chanting for several minutes, told him it was on the other side of the building. She said the object came from an animal, and was more than one colour; she also said it was raised off the ground. She moved to the other side of the building and knelt down next to the Land Rover. After a few more minutes of singing, she climbed into the back, raised the canvas sail and found the skin.

Boshier also learned the secret ritual of throwing bones, the traditional *sangoma* method for divining, for diagnosing illness, and for prescribing cures. Each witch doctor had to collect his own bones, by going on a trip that was guided by his spirit. The candidate witch doctor had to walk to certain rivers, mountains or the ocean, killing the various animals he came across on the way. From each animal he took a small bone, and it was this collection of bones that was one of the major tools of the *sangoma*'s practice.

The complete set of bones was usually so large that it was difficult to hold. The *sangoma* would divide the collection into two, breathe his spirit into them, and then throw them on the floor. Reading the bones seemed to involve a combination of taking note of the patterns in which they fell, and a strong paranormal intuition – attributed by the *sangoma* to the spirits.

On one occasion, Boshier consulted a *sangoma* on his return from an expedition to explore some ancient underground mines. At some point during this trip he had been about to enter a cave, when a leopard bolted out; if the leopard had been trapped inside the cave, it would undoubtedly have attacked him. The *sangoma* 'threw the bones' and then told Boshier that all she could see was the underworld – the underground. She saw him as the bone of the ant-eater who lives under ground; she warned him that he must be careful, and then pointed out the bone of the leopard, which lay next to his bone: 'The leopard was in that place,' she said, 'and he does not like people in his home. You must be very careful of this animal. I see you were right next to him.'

Above: a set of 'throwing bones' from northern Transvaal. A candidate witch doctor must collect his own set of bones; 'reading the bones' (after they have been thrown) is a vital element of the witch doctor's art

Below: Adrian Boshier wearing his *sangoma* ceremonial robes

The training that Boshier went through was only the first of several levels. Each level of training demanded a more rigorous testing, and a more profound ability to master the spirits, heal and prophesy. The candidate's readiness for each new level of training was signalled by a renewed attack of the sacred disease, which had to be subdued by new training, trances and singing.

During the time he was undergoing his training, Boshier discovered what was reputed to be the oldest mine in the world. More than 40,000 years old, this mine was one in which hematite, a red iron oxide ore, had been produced for religious ceremonies; the brilliant red-coloured ore was known as the 'blood of Mother Earth'. This discovery proved valuable when Boshier found himself in a part of the African bush that had not received any rain for six years.

Dancing for rain

At his suggestion, the local villages decided to do a special rain dance. This was possible only because of two of Boshier's discoveries: the mine, from which the blood of Mother Earth could be obtained; and the villages' sacred drums, which he had found in a mountain cave where the villagers had hidden them away from the European missionaries almost 100 years earlier. Each local village was responsible for one part of the complicated ceremony; and it was also necessary to 're-activate' the newly discovered drums, which had been out of use for so long. The drums were first drenched in the fat of a freshly killed ox mixed with the 'blood of the earth'; then they were beaten continuously from sunrise to sunset. A week later it rained; indeed, the 1965–1966 rainy season in that area was one of the wettest in decades.

As Boshier continued to work with the *sangomas*, he came to trust their powers of magic and divination; yet he never fully accepted the idea that spirits were responsible for the success of these practices. He began to spend more time in the city. There he started a project in which the *sangomas*' abilities were to be tested scientifically. At this time he was succumbing more and more frequently to attacks of epilepsy, which left him exhausted and depressed. His *sangoma* friends urged him to embark on the next level of training, but he felt unable to face this. In November 1978, Boshier suffered an epileptic attack while he was swimming – and drowned. Although he left behind him his diaries and a few papers, he had never been at ease with the written word; and much of the knowledge he had gained was lost.

continued from back cover

the Nevada desert – that could, of course, have a perfectly simple explanation if I knew more about the craft that the US military is testing these days; and the somewhat disconcerting experience of seeing bits of paint and plaster hop out of a wall and scatter themselves about my person while I was engaged in an unusually heated disagreement with a colleague who undoubtedly has a talent for attracting paranormal events. I can explain that *only* as paranormal.

This is all pretty trivial stuff, really – but enough, nonetheless, to maintain my belief that there is some objective reality behind even the most baroque versions of the paranormal. The field divides, I suspect, roughly into three. There are wholly subjective events (visions, contactee experiences, timeslips, that kind of thing) that may be set in motion by external stimuli but that are experienced only by certain kinds of people, for reasons that we can only guess at. Then there are misinterpretations of banal if unexpected experiences. I don't mean, by that, that someone – or *any*one – is deliberately misleading or setting out to hoax. I mean that the wish to believe in something otherworldly is stronger than the inclination to seek a commonplace explanation. At the other end of the scale is the objectively bizarre event: the premonition that is fulfilled, the all-too-real ravages of the poltergeist – whatever their cause, occurrences that are undoubtedly real.

An unseemly desire

Sorting out one of these shadings and gradings of experience from the other is the perennial vexation of the psychical researcher. I am inclined to think that perhaps not enough attention is paid to the witness, as opposed to the events themselves – and even less attention or insight is applied to the motives of the investigators. Almost without exception, psychical researchers are preoccupied with an unseemly desire to *prove the existence* of psi. This is not the attitude of true science, as I understand it: an objective scientific approach would involve a dispassionate enquiry as to *whether or not* psi exists. This isn't the place to theorise about the reasons – good and bad – why some people seem to have an emotional commitment to the existence of psi. Psychical researchers might nonetheless occasionally ask themselves what exactly it is that attracts their energies. In its innocence, *The Unexplained* did in fact try to set up the most thoroughgoing documentation ever of a PK 'minilab' only to find that the eminent researcher into psychokinesis we had engaged suddenly, and not wholly explicably, lost enthusiasm for the task. That was a pity.

Because of this quagmire of misgivings I seriously doubt that the 'scientific' approach to most paranormal events is appropriate, since the 'reality' one is dealing in depends for its existence on interpretation as much as it does on undeniably actual data. It may be that it is in the nature of paranormal events to be elusive. For all I know – speaking as a closet fan of the cosmic joker – we may be *meant* to be tested in this way.

Burning books

To take that stand is not to attack the pursuit of psychical research as such. A vocation for knowledge and understanding is part of what defines our humanity. The extremist sceptical position, which denounces psychical research as intrinsically worthless, is closely akin to the philistine's incapacity to comprehend why people study, say, Old Norse or the mythology of 'obscure' Congolese tribesmen. Stretch that intolerance a little further and the air will become thick with the smell of burning books – or worse.

Hope for progress, if there is to be any, remains with the Society for Psychical Research (SPR) – for all its faults. Certainly there is little to be expected from those tireless propagandists for psi, the tiresome devotees of the New Age, in which Atlantis will arise before us to steal not only the breakfast cereal from the very spoons beneath our noses, but most of what makes modern life bearable as well. Dedicated apostles of the New Age may care to reflect that without modern medicine, sanitation and food production, most of them would probably be either starving or dead, and that one alternative to their rejection of Western political and economic life – which includes the liberty to conduct disinterested scientific enquiry – is slavery. Rather the paradoxes that we now endure than the puritanical (and supercilious) superstitiousness that that motley crew would foist on us. The seeping intrusions of New Age themes into the effusions of the Association for the Scientific Study of Anomalous Phenomena (ASSAP), which broke away from the SPR with such high ideals in 1981, don't offer much reassurance that it will realise the ambitions implied in its title. So one can only wish the SPR well, albeit in the full consciousness that it is composed of frail human beings who live in an imperfect world. Even so, no one's ribs are sacred, and as long as the SPR's are prepared for the occasional sharp poke, the multiplicity of paranormal phenomena should continue to receive the attention it deserves.

Firmly on the fence

THE UNEXPLAINED is the world's largest, most comprehensive and most reliable assessment of paranormal phenomena. PETER BROOKESMITH reflects on the events of his three years as editor

When I took on the editorship of *The Unexplained*, my acquaintance with the world of the paranormal was scanty, anecdotal and mostly second hand. Some of my friends had experienced timeslips, premonitions and poltergeists. And curiously enough, my own family seemed to be no strangers to odd goings on. My mother had had an auditory phantasm of the dying: an old friend, whom she did not even know to be ill, gently said goodbye as he died of cancer. One of my sisters had seen a ghost or two; another was plagued by a poltergeist centred on her sons until she talked it out of its pranks. My father once almost pulled a gun on a female apparition kneeling at his bedside, but it prudently faded away before he had the chance to riddle the walls, and probably his feet, with hot lead. But all I had to show were some meagre coincidences and a few grim ironies. Well over 3000 pages and more than a million and a half words later, that particular aspect of my relationship with the paranormal has altered only a little. But what started as a virtual act of faith – that a publication devoted to the open-minded analysis and description of the paranormal was worth doing (and doing well) – has become a conviction. There is very little in all those pages that I would have second thoughts about publishing again.

Not that I can take a great deal of the credit for making the magazine as good as it is. From the start the editorial policy was to describe and investigate phenomena as objectively and disinterestedly as possible. That intention attracted an editorial staff whose intelligence, wit, professional skill, tact and dedication would have delighted even the crabbiest of editors. The same policy attracted a rare calibre of contributor, too; there is a real gratification in having had such a distinguished cast, some of whom let us scoop the national and the academic press with their stories. But not least of the satisfactions of this job over the last few years has been knowing that so many people, who week after week have bought the magazine in thousands upon thousands, really did *not* want to have sensational, misleading and largely untruthful reports of the paranormal thrust at them in the manner so beloved of the popular press.

The vast majority of our readers were irredeemably sane; but there were also some whose originality of perception knew no bounds. One gentleman had received some literary works from aliens in the depths of space: 'Dinya quona vasta vora denqua senqua distla du,' they went, 'kansa vansa dunqua dansa doqua noqua bestla da.' And *on* they went, in bright pink ink, remorselessly. An anxious young lady from Nottingham wondered if perhaps we were not in the grip of Satan, 'an extremely subtle beast'. Other correspondents had sadder tales to tell. The gentleman who wrote to us from what might loosely be called a state home for the bewildered ('I am staying here temporarily due to certain unexplained fires in my house') was one such. And there were others: the victim of electro-convulsive therapy convinced that the voices in her head were the work of government conspirators; the lady plagued by lights and visions; the man who could not understand why we had not addressed ourselves to the 'unexplained mystery' of why everyone believed that 6 million Jews had been murdered by the Nazis. That was a sobering side of our work.

Yet it was clear from the letters we received that bizarre and inexplicable occurrences were experienced, by perfectly unassuming people, even more frequently than the official literature indicated. While we have occasionally been led a dance by such witnesses, most of our correspondents have been as bemused as anyone about their experiences and have genuinely sought an explanation – even a sceptical one, as long as it was logical.

Premonitions and UFOs

Like everyone else who has worked on *The Unexplained*, I am sometimes asked what I really believe about the paranormal. I usually begin with some of the odd events that I can now claim to have experienced: a certain amount of telepathic communication – which, I am obliged to say, could have been based on subconscious logic (it involved someone I knew uncannily well); a rather startling premonitory dream whose setting was wholly unreal but whose 'message' was wholly accurate; the sight of a UFO over a missile testing range in the middle of

continued overleaf